Arboreta and Botanic Gardens

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South Coast wins land reclamation award

South Coast Botanic Garden was one of four projects recognized for innovative and creative land reclamation by the California Mining Association at its April meeting in San Francisco. The Excellence in Reclamation awards, the first of their kind, were presented for "significant achievement in planning, practice and environmental protection."

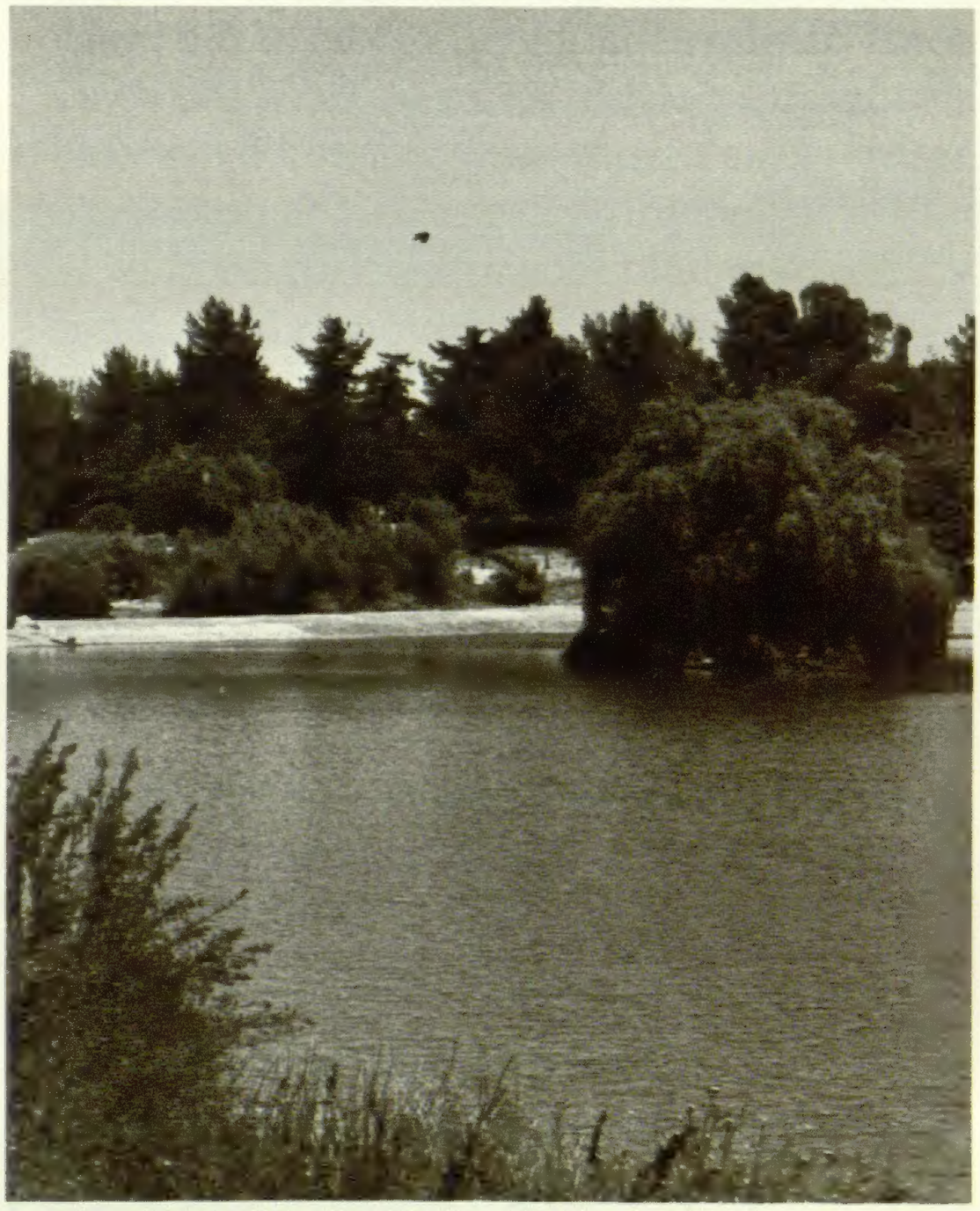
Winning entry for "Best Second Use" of a mine was submitted jointly by the South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation and Grefco, operator of a mine at the site of the present garden. A million tons of diatomite, a porous material used for filters, insulation and insecticide, was extracted before it became a county sanitary landfill in 1956.

The second—actually third—use began in 1961 when large scale plantings transformed the closed landfill into South Coast Botanic Garden.

Other awards went to M.J. Ruddy & Son Inc., submitted on behalf of the Central Valley Rock and Gravel Association Inc. in Merced County; Los Banos Gravel Company owned and operated by Ted Falasco in Merced County; and CalMat Company for a sand and gravel operation in Ventura County.

Judges for the awards were Professor Robert Twiss, UC Berkeley, landscape architecture; Johanna Wald, senior attorney, Natural Resources Defense Council; Robert Grunwald, State Mining & Geology Board; Tom Parillo, Nevada County Planning Director; and Dave Brown, consultant, Environmental Solutions, Inc.

The California Mining Association, headquartered in Sacramento, represents the state's major mineral producers. The industry records nearly $3 billion annually in production of commodities from gold to gravel.



Although the lake and stream look natural, they were actually created atop tons of trash.

"All Year Garden " blooms at Arboretum

Colorful swathes of perennials have begun blooming year around at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum since the Grace Kallam memorial garden was completed in May. The garden is located between the western road and stream in the Meadowbrook area.

The first garden at the Arboretum endowed by an individual covers about 7,000 square feet. A bequest by Mrs. Kallam's family includes funds for both the initial planting and for future maintenance. A gardener will spend about 20 hours a week keeping the thousands of flowering plants in top condition.

The "All Year Garden" incorporates many of the features that made Mrs. Kallam's home garden one of the most visited in Pasadena before her death in 1970.

The purpose of the memorial garden at the Arboretum is to show homeowners seasonal displays that blend colors of the trees, shrubs and perennials throughout the year. Many of the plants were donated by local nurseries including Desert to Jungle, Monrovia Nursery, and Norman's Nursery.

Shirley Kerins, a Huntington Beach landscape architect, designed the area as a series of special interest plantings bound together by a system of interlocking paths. As the small gardens swing through the seasons, different plants will predominate as their blooms blend and contrast for a constant but changing display.

Flowers in warm hues are concentrated in a roughly circular bed near the tram road. Cannas mirror the yellows and oranges of lion's tail, coreopsis and chrysanthemum.

Hedges along the northeast boundary separate the Rainbow Garden from the grassy hummocks of Meadowbrook. In summer, the blue of Cape plumbago, salvia and blue hibiscus shades into the yellow of iris and

A changing panorama of perennial blooms provide constant color in the "All Year Garden."

coreopsis. Silvery leaves of lamb's ears and the white flowers of shrubs like spiraea cluster under the airy white blooms of the Chinese fringe tree.

A dianthus collection occupies much of the space within the rounded outline of the Rock Garden. Other plantings there include thymes, yarrows and junipers.

Pastel tinted flowers subtly divide one long, narrow bed across the center. The south section is devoted to drought tolerant plants, contrasting with moisture loving perennials to the north. Water-thrifty plantings include lavendars, cistus and penstemons. In the moister, "dished" portion of the bed lythrum, abutilon and tradescantia thrive.

The "All Year Garden" is an apt tribute to Mrs. Kallam. Her enthusiasm and vast knowledge of horticulture proved invaluable as she held offices in the Southern California Iris Society, Los Angeles Garden Club and Little Garden Club of Pasadena. She won the Silver Medal of the American Iris Society many times and was awarded Honorary Life Membership in the Southern California Iris Society.

Annual volunteer award goes to Alice Thomas

Alice Frost Thomas, the Department's Volunteer of the Year, first became involved with the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum more than two decades ago. In 1967 she responded to a plea by Maria Stewart, wife of then-director Dr. William Stewart, for volunteers to help in the historical area.

"I was the only one drafted that way, Mrs. Thomas recalls. "We took field trips to learn what other groups were doing in forming volunteer organizations and in historical preservation...I eventually became the first president because no one else would take the job, " she continues with her typical self-effacing humor.

This small group of women who called themselves "Las Voluntarias" cared for the restored buildings at the Arboretum. Soon they began to give historical tours for school children, later diversifying to include information about plants. By the time Mrs. Thomas passed the leadership to Margaret Griffin-Jones in 1969, the group had grown to 30 members. The next year she chaired the first Baldwin Bonanza plant sale to raise funds for the Arboretum.

In 1970 she was elected to the California Arboretum Foundation Board of Trustees. During her next three years as membership chair the Foundation increased from 700 members in 1970 to more than 3,000 in 1973.

Mrs. Thomas was elected the first woman president of the Foundation in 1972. After a busy year that included the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Foundation and the Arboretum, family obligations called her away from the Arboretum and eventually Southern California. When she returned in 1986, Mrs. Thomas was again elected president and headed the Foundation for another four years. The Board of Trustees has changed a great deal under Mrs. Thomas' leadership.

"No longer is it a caretaker's job," she says. "All trustees must be involved in one or more committees and are expected to make a contribution to the capital campaign."

Although Mrs. Thomas emphasizes teamwork among Board members, her modesty dissolves when she talks of the cooperation she fostered among the Department gardens. A new Patron of the Gardens or Four Garden Express Card that she proposed entitles members who purchase a special membership in any one garden to visit the other three free.

In 1986 Mrs. Thomas led the Foundation in funding a feasibility study and master plan for the future development of the Arboretum. Beverly Rouse was hired as development director and a fund raising program was initiated. In the next three years the Foundation's revenue increased almost 90 percent—from $814,592 in 1985 to $1.5 million in 1989. With a new orchid greenhouse com-

Alice Thomas (center) *receives scrolls from Mrs. George Deukmejian and Supervisor Deane Dana at the Los Angeles County volunteer recognition luncheon.*

pleted and renovation of the Peacock Cafe underway, the Foundation is now raising funds for a $4 million Education, Library and Research facility.

When Mrs. Thomas assesses her continuing dedication to Arboretum projects, her words apply to the future as well as the past. "Perhaps it is a symbiotic relationship that I have with LASCA," she says. "If I have contributed to it, LASCA has contributed enormously to the quality of my life and that of other County residents."

New Superintendent named for Descanso Gardens

Dr. Steven Cohan has been appointed Superintendent of Descanso Gardens, effective July 1. Dr. Cohan has served as Acting Superintendent for the past two months, replacing George Lewis who retired after 19 years at the garden.

Dr. Cohan was chosen for the position following a nationwide search that attracted 22 applicants. Seven finalists from across the country were interviewed by a selection

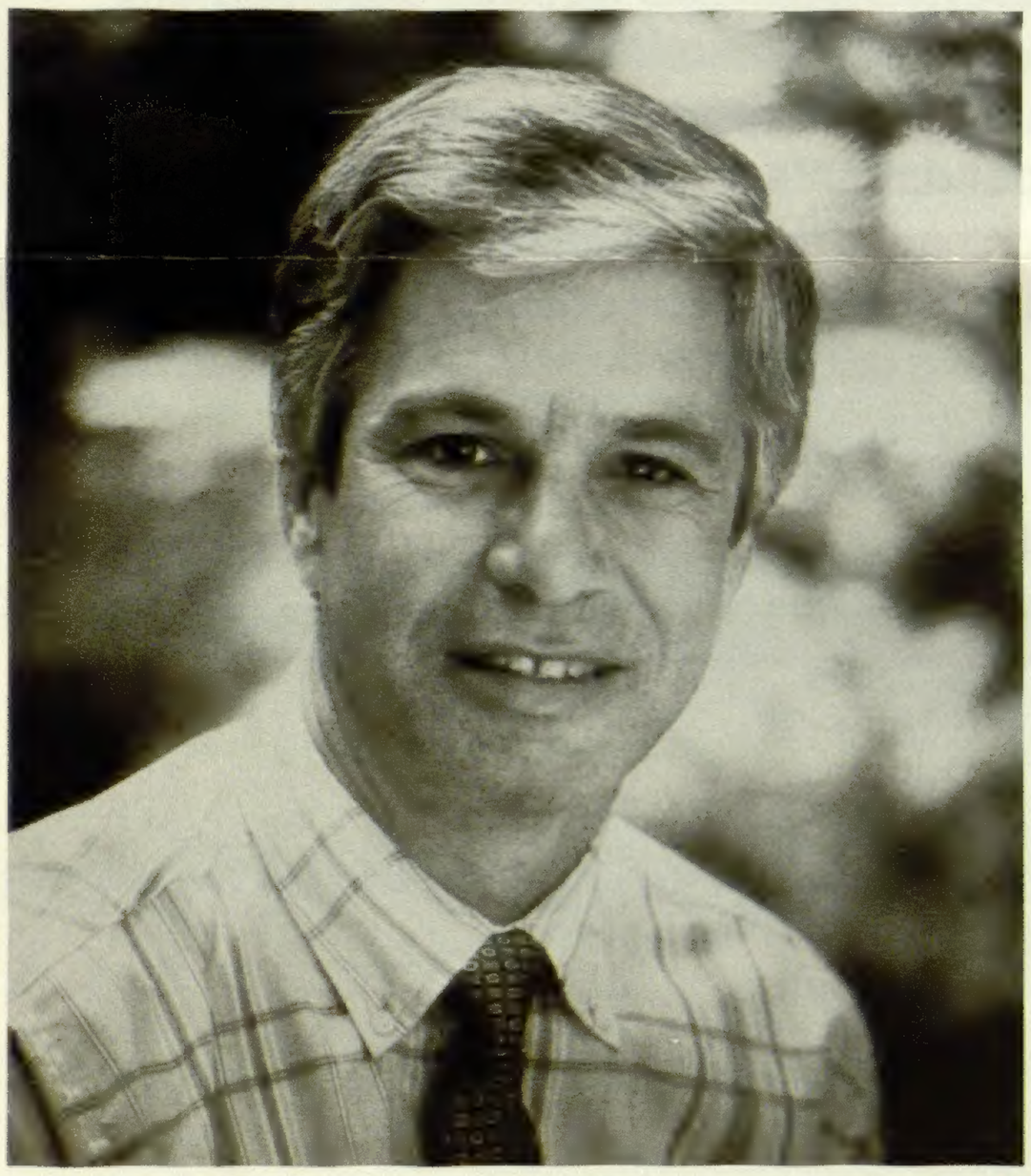


Photo by John Torrey

Dr. Steven Cohan

committee which included Dr. Mildred Mathias, Director Emeritus of the UCLA botanical garden. Dr. Cohan emerged as the top candidate.

"It's a pleasure to appoint someone of Dr. Cohan's calibre," said Leon G. Arnold, Acting Director of the Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens. "I'm sure he will provide Descanso Gardens with outstanding leadership qualities and a personal cooperative attitude."

Dr. Cohan joined the Department last year as Assistant Superintendent at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum in Arcadia. His impact on that facility was immediate and important, Mr. Arnold said. In addition to his regularly assigned management responsibilities he developed an outline for a formalized garden maintenance training program and an activities outline for the summer internship program.

As Superintendent of Descanso Gardens Dr. Cohan plans to emphasize youth programs, water conservation classes for homeowners and the role wildlife plays in the garden's environment.

Before joining the Department, Dr. Cohan spent four years directing a plant breeding research program for a commercial seed company, two years on the faculty of Cal Poly Pomona, seven years as owner and operator of a commercial nursery and one and a half years as Horticultural Director of Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden.

Dr. Cohan has also written a series of garden books and conducted garden programs on radio. He is affiliated with several local and national professional organizations.

After receiving a Bachelor of Science in horticulture from Iowa State University, he earned a Masters of Science degree in horticulture and a PhD in plant genetics from Pennsylvania State University.

Dr. Cohan lives in Upland with his wife Diane, and their two children, ages 11 and 16.

Virginia Robinson Gardens mansion refurbished

The historic home of Virginia Robinson now looks much as it did when her father, architect Nathaniel Dryden, completed it 78 years ago. Underscoring the timelessness of beauty, the reproduced color scheme looks surprisingly modern compared with the institutional gray that covered the residence when Los Angeles County inherited the Virginia Robinson Gardens a decade ago. It also blends well with the time-mellowed tones of the courtyard walls and playhouse facade.

Historically accurate colors were chosen after building restoration specialist Ron Reed completed extensive studies. Mr. Reed and historical architect Raymond Gireigian even obtained specimens of the paint first applied in 1912.

The team determined that stucco surfaces of the house and walls had been a shade they describe as "bittersweet beige." A paler tint of the same color was applied to the balcony, balustrades and columns. Wood trim around doors and windows was painted forest green and ironwork a blackish green.

The new paint finishes eight months of restoration work on the exterior of the main residence. Before painting, fissures in the surface of the cast concrete building were cleaned and filled with epoxy forced in under pressure. Badly deteriorated concrete balustrades edging the roofline were repaired or replaced. Weathered wood around windows and doors was restored and refitted.

Restoration of the interior and furnishings continues. So far 10 Persian and Islamic rugs have been cleaned and repaired with funds from the Friends of Robinson Gardens. The entire project has been financed with a $65,000 grant from Los Angeles County and $110,000 from the Friends.

Peacock Cafe renovation progresses

Concrete walls will buttress dining terraces when renovation of the Peacock Cafe is completed in late summer.

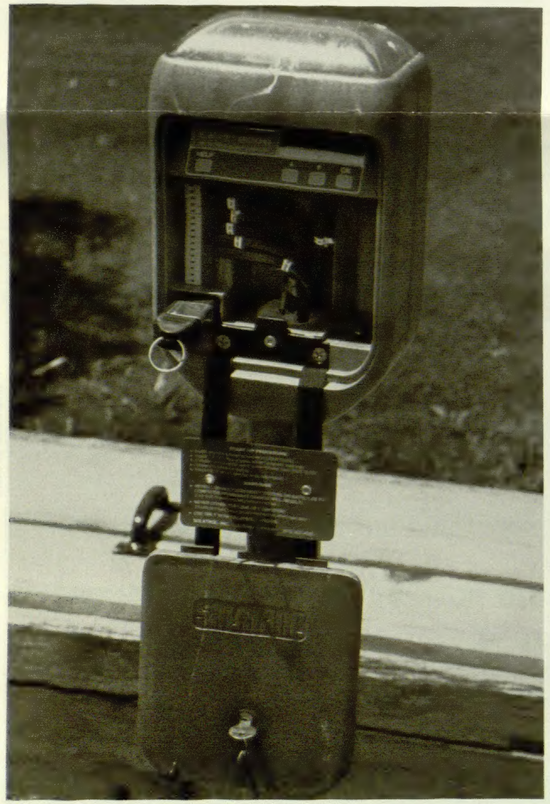
Solving problems of gardening on a former landfill

Development of the South Coast Botanic Garden on the site of a former landfill was from the beginning a bold experiment in urban horticulture and land reclamation. The site presented many unusual challenges because of its history and also because its soil consisted largely of heavy, nutrient-poor alkaline diatomaceous marine sediment. This article addresses the problem of irrigation, one of the many unusual challenges associated with such a site.

Decomposition of the organic matter in a former landfill generates methane gas and ground subsidence, causing roadways and buildings to sink and crack. It also wreaks havoc with long, straight, stationary pipes carrying water through a garden.

During the first two years of the recent redevelopment period, the desperate condition of the pipes became apparent when the staff began testing abandoned portions of the irrigation system. Each day for the first year or two an average of four to five separate leaks or breaks in the irrigation lines required repairs. The "great breaks" of '84 and '86, when main lines ruptured, are documented with Polaroid photos on an office wall. Repair problems were compounded by the fact that some lines had been buried up to eight feet deep with fill dirt, spread as the land had settled.

About three years ago, a plan was initiated to systematically overhaul the entire irrigation system. Phase 1, now about 40-50 percent complete, involves abandoning or removing all deeply sunken and worn-out pipes and replacing them with new lines in an effort to again provide water to all parts of the garden. The second phase calls for installation of water-conserving drip irrigation tailored to the requirements of the new landscaping.

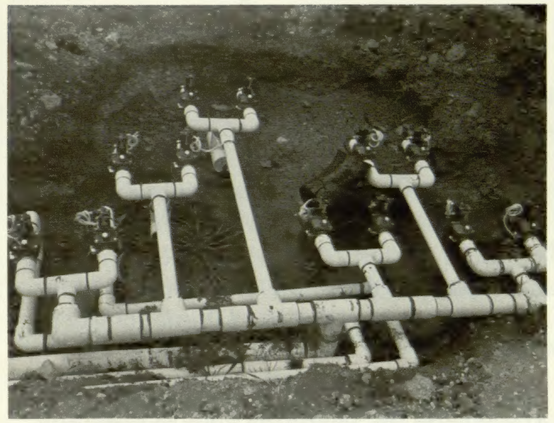


Solar power helps keep remote areas green by activating moisture sensors where electricity can't reach.

New irrigation lines being installed incorporate slip joints that allow pipes to move several inches without leaking.

Subsidence will continue, so safeguards have been designed into the updated system. The amount of pipe under constant pressure has been reduced to a minimum. Increasing main valves from two to seven allows broken lines to be isolated while water moves through the balance of the system. Fittings and pipe sizes have been standardized. Controllers have been grouped in twelves around timers to reduce the network of electrical lines that formerly went to each valve in the field.

New technologies have been used where appropriate. For example, a recently developed slip joint for connecting sections of pipe will provide three or more inches of horizontal movement at the joint before leaks occur. In remote locations without electricity, solar-powered computerized timers deliver water to lateral lines. Moisture sensors in the ground at some stations signal the controllers when soil moisture reaches a low threshold level.



Grouping irrigation controllers around timers helps reduce the network of electrical lines going through the grounds.

Maintaining a garden on a landfill is similar to trying to grow plants for drought-tolerance. The more water that is applied the faster the ground subsides. In an effort to reduce water use, large areas of thirsty lawn and acres of groundcover are gradually being replaced by colorful collections of trees and shrubs.

Polymer granules that swell and hold moisture at the root zone are added to fill dirt of new plantings. Chipped material from the garden is routinely used as mulch to hold moisture and reduce weed competition. Accepting only high-quality fill dirt helps reduce the amount of moisture reaching the landfill zone.

The combination of appropriate plants, a new irrigation system, and other water-conserving strategies will make it possible to save water while providing visitors with a more attractive garden. Ideas that work at the South Coast Botanic Garden will have wider applications for Los Angeles County and other municipalities with similar areas.

Veteran Superintendent retires at Descanso

George Lewis retired April 30 as Superintendent of Descanso Gardens, a position he held for the past 16 years. Beginning 33 years ago as a gardener with the Department, he advanced to nurseryman, senior gardener at the Arboretum and Assistant Superintendent at Descanso Gardens four years later.

More than 500 people gathered at a retirement party to honor Mr. Lewis and read his congratulatory letters from President George Bush, Governor George Deukmejian, Congressman Carlos Moorhead, Senator Pete Wilson and the California State Legislature.

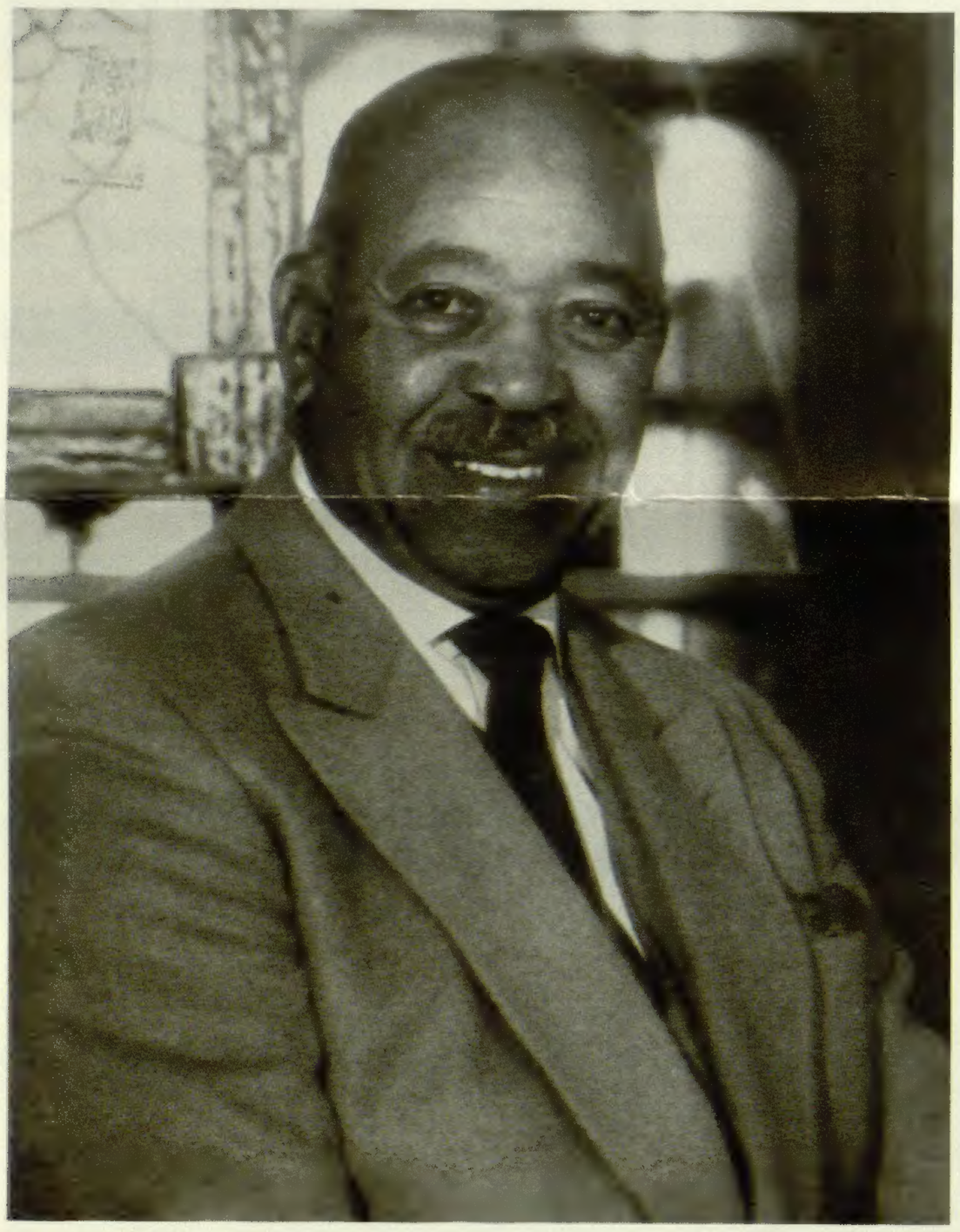


Photo by John Torrey

George Lewis

Other commendations came from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, City of Pasadena, City of La Canada Flintridge, and La Canada Valley Beautiful.

Members of the Descanso Gardens Guild, who cooperated with the Department in staging the party, praised Mr. Lewis' commitment to the garden.

"In a world that's not always gentle, we've come together to honor this gentle, dignified man who's contributed so much to making Descanso Gardens the oasis of peace, serenity and beauty for which it is famous, " said Mary Ann Arnett, Guild President.

Mr. Lewis responded by describing his career as one of deep fulfillment.

"I never missed a day of work due to illness in my entire career," he said. "The secret is that I looked forward to each day spent in such beautiful surroundings. I sang and spoke to the flowers, and believe me, they do understand."

His most notable achievements while Superintendent focused on the thousands of tulips and other flowering bulbs he planted each year, his annual Christmas wreath creations and demonstrations, the Descanso Gardens Plant Propagation Society that he founded, and the many hours of expert consultation he gave to local organizations.

Although Mr. Lewis plans to devote more time to his family now, he will maintain his association with Descanso Gardens. He has been elected to the Guild Board of Trustees and will continue his popular weekly lectures for the Plant Propagation Society.

Employee of the Year thrives on change

Janice Golden, personnel officer, was named 1989 employee of the year by the Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens. She was also nominated as the Los Angeles County Employee of the Month for April. A scroll honoring Ms. Golden's outstanding achievements was presented at ceremonies April 17 at the County Hall of Administration.

During her 22-year career, Ms. Golden's greatest asset has been her capacity to change. After one year with Los Angeles County, she transferred to the Department in 1969 as an intermediate stenographer, later filling different assignments—including executive secretary— and taking advantage of on-the-job training. When she was appointed personnel officer in 1985, Ms. Golden did not have formal credentials, but her knowledge of the Department's methods and procedures had already prepared her for the new challenge.

When Los Angeles County decentralized its personnel program recently, Ms. Golden took responsibility for duties that in the past had been processed by the Chief Administrative Office. She now handles recruitment, selection and classification procedures, often accomplishing in days what in the past took weeks moving through channels.

Ms. Golden has also increased productivity within the Department by changing hidebound personnel practices. Because she now has control over testing and hiring, Ms. Golden helps select each employee to fit the needs of a particular garden. Then she follows up by monitoring and classifying that employee's area of responsibility. Improved materials such as an updated personnel manual are also in process.

Morale boosters Ms. Golden initiated —a monthly employee newsletter, discount tickets for local attractions and safety training—have fostered a sense of unity within the Department. In turn, she encourages employees to contribute to the community by coordinating programs from blood donor drives to walk-a-thons.

Not only does Ms. Golden do a 40 hour job in 30 hours every week, she and her husband, Bob, are also full-time parents to their daughters, Kelly and Michelle. She is an assistant coach for soccer and softball teams and assistant room mother for each girl. She is also active on the school's Parent/Teacher Fellowship Board.

Ms. Golden will probably be undaunted by any future changes in the Department because this energetic lady has specialized in adaptation for more than two decades.

Acting Director Leon G. Arnold (left) and Supervisor Peter F. Schabarum congratulate Janice Golden, Employee of the Year for the Department.

John Provine honored by alma mater

The Ornamental Horticulture and Park Administration Alumni Association at California State Polytechnic Institute, Pomona, named John Provine as Outstanding Alumnus at its annual banquet May 19. Mr. Provine was founding president of the association, serving from 1976-78. In making the award the association commended Mr. Provine for his continuous support of the school and his involvement in professional and community horticultural activities. As Arboretum Superintendent, he encourages students to use the Arboretum, and initiated the horticultural internship arrangement between the garden and Cal Poly. Mr. Provine is also guest lecturer at the school and often advises local beautification committee groups.

Winning essay outlines public service goals

An essay by Dr. Steve Cohan earned him one of nine awards presented during Public Service Recognition Week in early May. Dr. Cohan, who was recently promoted to Superintendent of Descanso Gardens, gave this prize-winning answer to the question" What role do I play in providing quality service to County residents?"

I am fortunate, in my position, to come in contact with hundreds of county residents who visit the Los Angeles County Arboretum on a daily basis as well as those attending special functions hosted at this facility. In both instances I make every effort to be courteous, informative and at their service so that their visit will be a pleasant and rewarding experience.

My association with the water conservation garden on the premises enables me to share my knowledge with county residents. I have spent several hours, directly with visitors and through the Arboretum's water conservation symposium, providing guidelines for implementing water conserving measures in their home landscapes. This effort is particularly gratifying because of the positive impact on conserving one of the county's most limiting resources.

In my role as the Assistant Superintendent with the Los Angeles County Arboretum my efforts are expanded to ensure that the plant collections fulfill the objectives for which they were established:

1. To provide county residents with new landscape materials that are well adapted to the Southern California climate.
2. To provide an outdoor classroom for county educators, which enables them to expose their students to plants from around the world.
3. To create an environment that will serve as an oasis from the rigors of a metropolitan existence.

In essence, my role is to provide county residents with an appreciation of nature's creations, and Los Angeles County for making it all possible.

Consolidation Study Discontinued

At its meeting June 26, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, on the recommendation of Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, instructed the Los Angeles County Citizens Economy and Efficiency Commission to terminate its study of potential consolidation of the Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens with other County Departments.

Supervisor Antonovich's recommendation, which was unanimously approved without discussion, also instructed the Chief Administrative Officer, Richard Dixon, to begin the selection process for nationwide recruitment of a new Director of the Arboreta and Botanic Gardens and report back with a recruitment plan which will incorporate input from the arboreta and botanic gardens' major support groups regarding leadership characteristics for a new Director.

Summer Concerts at the gardens

July 29
2:30 p.m.
Flute concert by Pioneer Youth
Under the Oaks at Descanso Gardens
Free

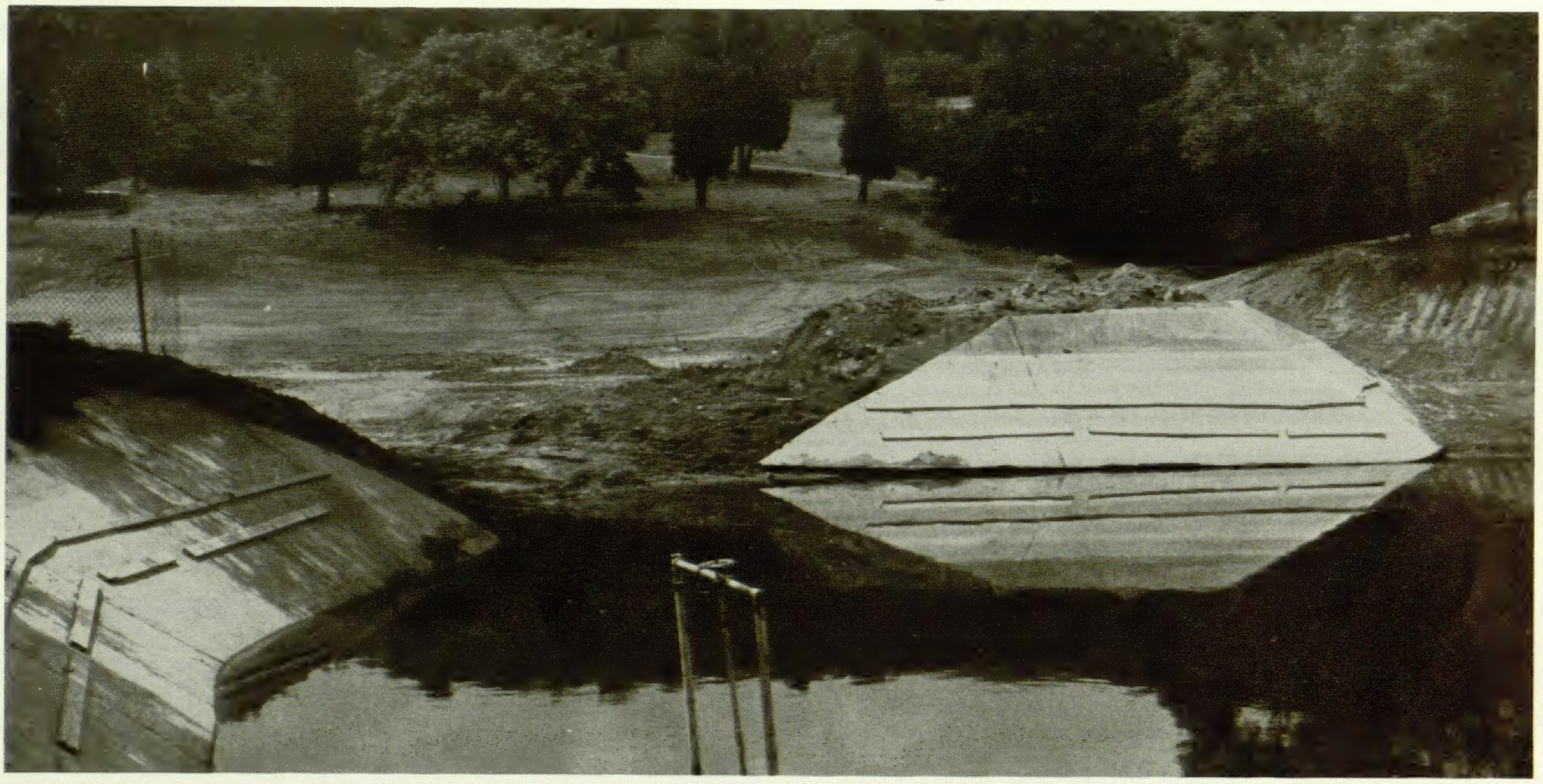
August 5
2:30 p.m.
Big Band music by Verdugo Swing Society
Entry Way Vista garden at Arboretum

August 5
2:30 p.m.
Woodwind concert by Laurel Quintet
Under the Oaks at Descanso Gardens
Free

August 26
2:30 p.m.
Big Band music by Verdugo Swing Society
Under the Oaks at Descanso Gardens
Free

September 3
4:30 p.m. to dusk
Picnic, concert
Palos Verdes Symphonic Band
on lawn at South Coast Botanic Garden

Descanso Lake project grading almost finished



Grading on the $350,000 lake project at Descanso Gardens is almost complete. When water fills the enlarged excavation, the lake will cover about 1.5 acres. Officials expect that the lake will be ready when the first migrating waterfowl arrive this fall. A nesting island in the center will provide a protected bird habitat.

Missouri Botanical Garden Library

GARDEN EVENTS

JULY	**Begonia Show** Arboretum Sat. 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. **28-** Sun. 9 p.m. to 4 p.m. **29** San Gabriel Valley Begonia Society displays unusual species, bonsais and colorful clusters. Plants on sale.
JULY	**Shakespeare on the Meadow** South Coast Botanic Garden **24-** "Taming of the Shrew" performed **29** by New Place Theater Company Reservations call (213) 544-0404.
AUG	**Bromeliad Show** South Coast Botanic Garden **4-** Sat. noon to 4:30 p.m. **5** South Bay Bromeliad Associates display, on-going demonstrations, rare and exotic plants for sale
AUG	**Verdugo Swing Society** Arboretum **5** 2:30 p.m. Big Band Music in Entry Way Vista Gardens Admission to concert is free.
AUG	**Cactus and Succulent Show** Arboretum **18-** Sat., Sun. 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. **19** San Gabriel Valley, Long Beach, Los Angeles societies show off oddities. Plants will be on sale.
SEPT	**Free Picnic and Concert** South Coast Botanic Garden 4:30 p.m. to dusk **3** Palos Verdes Symphonic Band takes the labor out of the day with a free concert. Bring a picnic and relax.
SEPT	**Fern and Exotic Plant Sale** Arboretum **1-** Each day 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. **3** Los Angeles International Fern Society fills Ayres Hall with hundreds of displays. Young specimens of show ferns for sale.
OCT	**Plant Sale** Descanso **13-** Each day 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. **14** 1,000 extraordinary plants Chinese grape, Angel's Trumpet and more

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Virginia Robinson Gardens
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